

Maybe by allonsysilvertongue

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Relationships: Eleven & Jim "Chief" Hopper, Joyce Byers/Jim "Chief" Hopper

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Summary:

Based on a prompt I received on Tumblr: "Jopper prompt for you-Hopper and Joyce reminiscing like they did in that scene in season 2, and Hopper fumbling over properly asking her out for a drink. But he eventually asks her and it's just pure fluff ♥"

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The roads in Hawkins were long and winding, especially when one's home is a cabin somewhere in the woods. As he drove, Jim Hopper lighted up his second cigarette. He had just dropped El off - *Jane*, he corrected himself and it was something he still needed to get used to – at the Snow Ball.

Of course, he had told her – *promised* – that he would head home just to give her some space. She had smiled at him, not truly understanding what 'space' meant yet. He had talked himself the night before that it would be okay to give her room to breathe and to enjoy herself like the kid that she is.

Except.... He was worrying himself to a state right now even as he drove home.

It was *one* night.

It was important to her but it didn't mean he would worry less. They had spent a year being careful, not being stupid, and to suddenly just let her go like this for the night where she would be in *public* and where anyone could see her was making him sick.

He needed to stop worrying. He needed to find something else to focus on.

His thoughts drifted to Joyce.

If he was in this state, he guessed, she would be worst off. She wouldn't be heading home and perhaps, neither should he. If anything were to happen, he would be in the vicinity.

Flicking his cigarette off, Jim turned the car around and drove back for the middle school. He was back there in less than five minutes which meant, he couldn't last out there without worrying about El being out of the house for more than that time.

He stepped out of his vehicle and into the night, and there she was, a

familiar figure leaning against a car as she watched the school.

Two peas in a pod.

"Thought I might find you out here."

There was no need to tell her that like her, he couldn't seem to stay away from the kid. She could probably guess so he simply offered her a cigarette. Sharing a cigarette between them was something old and familiar, and lately, with all that they had been forced to go through together, it has become comforting, for him, at least.

Smoking was also a good distraction to have especially if they were going to talk about heavy things.

"Every day it does get a little easier," he told her, putting an arm around her to comfort.

At first, he didn't think that she would lean in for comfort, assuming that she would very much prefer Bob's comfort than his but maybe, he was all she has right now, the only other adult to fully understand her situation. So when she reached up to touch the tip of his fingers on her shoulder, he dropped kiss to her head.

"We've got to stop meeting like this," he chuckled.

She laughed lightly and he really liked the sound of it.

"Well, I'm not calling you in a panic because some monster is after my baby. You're here because we are *both* worried parents."

That sent a jolt through him. Parent.... He never thought he would hear himself be described as such again, not since his girl....

He shook his head, refusing to dwell on such thoughts.

"I guess that's another way to keep meeting," he said, his chest rumbled with every word.

Maybe they didn't have to do it in the parking lot....

He supposed in the future, El would be hanging out with the boys

often, and it wouldn't do for them to lurk around being worried so the words came out before he could stop himself, "You - you want to go for - um- coffee sometime?"

In that split second he wished he could take it back. He just meant that they could accompany each other, two worried people, without it sounding like he was asking her out. Truthfully, he wouldn't be opposed to it but it would be too soon. It was the last thing Joyce needed.

"You know... to just wait the kids out or something when they have - um - school stuffs," he cleared his throat. "You know, maybe...?"

He wished he was more eloquent but words were never his strongest suit. Physical strength and brute force was something he was good at.

"Maybe."

He looked up to see her smiling at him, and the thought of that *maybe*, that *someday* was enough for him.